



Examining Worshiper Generosity: Giving Money and Giving Time

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© Deborah Bruce, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), presented at the 2011 meeting of the International Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Aix en Provence, France. For details on the U.S. Congregational Life Survey: www.USCongregations.org



U.S. CONGREGATIONS

Research Question

Are worshipers who are generous with their time and talents also financially generous?



Previous Research

- Religious giving is large part of overall philanthropy in the United States.
- Religious giving has declined in recent years.
- Religious giving differs by denomination.
- Even within a congregation, religious giving of individual worshipers varies.



Previous Research

- Big Five Factors (*Money Matters*, Hoge, Zech, McNamara, Donohue, 1996):
 - ◆ High family income
 - ◆ High level of church involvement
 - ◆ Evangelical theology
 - ◆ Planning one's giving for the year
 - ◆ Small congregation size



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U.S. Congregational Life Survey

- First conducted in April 2001
- Wave 2: Fall 2008 and Spring 2009
- Funded by:
 - ◆ Lilly Endowment
 - ◆ Louisville Institute
 - ◆ PC(USA)
- Based on prior research in Australia and New Zealand



What Makes the US CLS Unique?

- Includes random sample of congregations
- Focus is on worshipers, not leaders
- Survey distributed in worship
- 64,674 worshipers in 256 congregations participated in 2008/2009



Three Surveys

- **Attendee Survey**—all worshipers age 15 and up
- **Congregational Profile**—one per congregation
- **Leader Survey**—key leader (head of staff, solo pastor, CLP, etc.)



Congregational Giving

- Q: About how much do you give financially to this congregation?
 - I give 10% or more of net income regularly
 - I give about 5% to 9% of net income regularly
 - I give less than 5% of net income regularly
 - I give a small amount whenever I am here
 - I do not contribute financially here



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Congregational Giving

- Percent of worshipers giving 5%+ of income:
 - ◆ 35% in Catholic parishes
 - ◆ 52% in mainline Protestant churches
 - ◆ 65% in conservative Protestants churches



Involvement that Influences Giving

- Frequency of worship attendance
- Membership in the congregation
- Participation in small groups
- Holding a leadership position
- Involvement in church decision making
- Spoke at congregational meeting
- Involvement in congregational outreach
- Invited someone to visit



Types of Participation

- Factor analysis revealed 3 types:
 - ◆ Involvement in church leadership
 - ◆ Basic church involvement
 - ◆ Involvement in religious education

See Table 2.



Three Types of Participation

- Involvement in church leadership
 - ◆ On church board, committee, task force
 - ◆ Often participate in church decision making
 - ◆ Spoke at congregational meeting

- Coefficient alpha = .668



Three Types of Participation

- Basic church involvement
 - ◆ Attend worship weekly
 - ◆ Member of the congregation
 - ◆ Participate in fellowship group

- Coefficient alpha = .542



Three Types of Participation

- Involvement in religious education
 - ◆ Participate in church school
 - ◆ Church school leader; other church educator

- Coefficient alpha = .622



Other Factors Influencing Giving

- Demographics
- Theological Beliefs
- Leadership
- Congregational Factors

See Table 3.



Demographics

- Gender—women give more



Demographics

- Gender—women give more
- Age—older worshipers give more



Demographics

- Gender—women give more
- Age—older worshipers give more
- Employment status:
 - ◆ Catholics and MP: Not employed (retired) give more
 - ◆ CP: Employed give more



Demographics

- Income:
 - ◆ Catholics: No difference
 - ◆ MP: Earning less than \$50K give more
 - ◆ CP: Earning more than \$50K give more



Demographics

- Income:
 - ◆ Catholics: No difference
 - ◆ MP: Earning less than \$50K give more
 - ◆ CP: Earning more than \$50K give more
- Those *without* kids at home give more



Beliefs

- Those with conservative theological beliefs give more:
 - ◆ Agree that “Only followers of Jesus Christ can be saved.”



Leadership

- Inspiring leadership is linked to more giving:
 - ◆ The pastor here inspires others to action.



Congregational Factors

- Size (average worship attendance):
 - ◆ Catholics: No small churches
 - ◆ MP: More give 5%+ in small churches
 - ◆ CP: No difference



Congregational Factors

- Hold annual stewardship campaign:
 - ◆ MP and CP: More give 5%+ if church does *not* hold stewardship campaign
 - ◆ Catholics: No difference



Congregational Factors

- Congregation's culture of giving:
 - ◆ Catholic and CP: More individuals give 5%+ in churches with culture of generosity
 - ◆ MP: Fewer give 5%+ in such churches



Predicting Individual Giving

- Demographics
- Involvement in the congregation
- Conservative theological beliefs
- Inspiring leadership
- Congregational factors

See Tables 4-6.



Catholics

- All three involvement factors are important
- Also important:
 - ◆ Conservative beliefs
 - ◆ Inspiring leadership
 - ◆ *Not* having annual stewardship campaign
 - ◆ Culture of generosity

See Table 4.



Mainline Protestants

- All three involvement factors are important
- Also important:
 - ◆ Conservative beliefs
 - ◆ Congregational size
 - ◆ Having annual stewardship campaign
 - ◆ Culture of generosity

See Table 5.



Conservative Protestants

- All three involvement factors are important
- Also important:
 - ◆ Conservative beliefs
 - ◆ Inspiring leadership
 - ◆ Congregational size
 - ◆ Culture of generosity

See Table 6.



Predicting Individual Giving

- What factors are ***most*** important in each faith group? (highest standardized betas)

See Table 7.



Predicting Individual Giving

	Cath.	MP	CP
Age (older worshipers)	1	1	2
Income (high)	3	4	4
Basic church involvement	2	2	1
Conservative beliefs	5	5	5
Culture of generosity	4	3	3



Conclusions

- Involvement in congregational life influences religious giving.
- Much consistency across faith groups in factors that are most important predictors of giving.



Predicting Individual Giving

	Hoge	USCLS
High family income	Yes	Yes
Church involvement	Yes	Yes
Evangelical theology	Yes	Yes
Planning yearly giving	Yes	Mixed
Small congregational size	Yes	Mixed
Age		Yes
Culture of generosity		Yes

Conclusions

- Across two substantially different research projects, three important predictors of individual giving:
 - ◆ Income
 - ◆ Church involvement
 - ◆ Conservative beliefs



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